WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny Hoyer, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and the only member from Maryland, today announced that the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations conference report which, at his request, included over $1 million for dredging and the construction of jetties at St Jerome Creek.

“The federal navigation channel at St. Jerome Creek restricts the ability of local recreational boaters, watermen, charter boat operators, and others to exit and enter the waterways during periods of low tide,” Hoyer said. “The construction of jetties will free up these critical pathways and reduce the dredging need from a two year cycle to a ten year cycle.” The conference report provides $200,000 to study the feasibility of constructing up to two jetties, as well as $850,000 to dredge 4900 feet of the creek.

St. Jerome Creek provides the only safe harbor between Point Lookout and the Patuxent River for boats on the Chesapeake Bay seeking shelter from rapidly approaching storms. Many residents of the Creek depend on access to the Chesapeake Bay for income, including watermen and charter boat operators. At the request of Congressman Hoyer, the Army Corps of Engineers agreed to expedite the St. Jerome Creek project, and the funding provided in the bill will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to improve the navigability and safety of St. Jerome Creek in order to provide expanded access to boaters.

Chesapeake Bay Shoreline Erosion Study - $975,000

Nearly 5 million cubic yards of sediment is deposited annually in the Bay, which has the effect of worsening water quality, destroying valuable wetlands and underwater habitat, and fills navigation channels. At Congressman Hoyer’s request, the House version of the bill provided funding to study this critical issue. This study money follows on the $580,000 Congressman Hoyer was able to secure last year, and has been identified as critical to achieving future water quality improvements in the Chesapeake Bay.

Rep. Hoyer also strongly advocated for the following projects in Southern Maryland. They were funded during Senate consideration of the bill, and included in the final conference report.

Herring Creek, Tall Timbers--Revetment Construction, $405,000

This funding will help the Army Corps of Engineers address the problem of shoreline erosion induced by the Herring Creek entrance jetties and will be used for the engineering and design of a 350-foot freestanding stone revetment. This revetment is a cost effective alternative to periodic beach nourishment (adding sand to an eroded beach). Last year Congressman Hoyer was able to secure $125,000 to begin work on this project.

Patuxent River, Patuxent Beach Road, $34,000

Continuous wave action has caused erosion behind the bulkhead at Murray Road forming large eroded sinkholes. Further erosion will compromise the stability of the road located along the bulkhead. This funding will enable the Corps to complete pre-construction engineering design to construct a new bulkhead and provide adequate protection against further shoreline erosion.

Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection Program - $2 million

This funding enables the Army Corps of Engineers to provide design and construction assistance to State and local authorities in the environmental restoration of the Chesapeake Bay for various types of projects throughout the state of Maryland.

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Restoration and Development - $500,000

Underwater bay grasses, also called submerged aquatic vegetation or SAV, once grew in abundance, covering an estimated 200,000 acres-along the shallows and shorelines of the Chesapeake Bay, providing protection and nursery habitat for a broad range of aquatic organisms, contributing to the oxygenation of the water, and preventing erosion and sedimentation. The 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement set several goals for SAV restoration, including the restoration of 114,000 acres of SAV and the implementation of a strategy to accelerate protection and restoration of SAV beds in areas of critical importance to the Bay's living resources. This funding will allow the Army Corps to continue its investigation, assessment and demonstration of various large scale SAV restoration techniques and technology.

Erosion control, St. Mary’s River -- $630,000

Portions of the St. Mary's River in St. Mary's County have experienced erosion problems in recent years. This funding will allow the Army Corps of Engineers to study the erosion and plan, design, and complete construction to fix the problem.

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